

Remarks

This reply is in response to the Office communication of June 9, 2006. Claims 31, 33-56 were pending. By the amendment above, Claims 31, 38, 41-51, and 54-56 have been amended, and claim 33 has been cancelled without prejudice. Upon entry of this Amendment, Claims 31, and 34-56 will be pending and in condition for allowance.

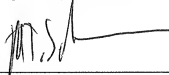
The courtesy of the Examiner in granting a telephonic interview on October 16, 2006, to the undersigned, his colleague Philip Goldman, and inventor Dr. Jeffrey Felt is appreciated. A Statement of Substance of the Interview is submitted herewith.

In the course of the interview, it was agreed that Claim 31 would be amended, as above, to reflect certain features presently addressed in claims 33, 55, and 56. Applicant offered this amendment to obtain allowance of allowable subject matter at the earliest possible date. The remaining claims have been editorially amended to reflect the changes proposed to claim 31. In turn, it was agreed that claim 31, amended in the manner presently provided, would distinguish over the Bonutti reference, for reasons provided previously and for others as well.

The Examiner is encouraged to telephone the undersigned in the event any further matters remain to be addressed.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional filing fees required to Deposit Account No. 06-1910.

Respectfully submitted,



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Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

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